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THE CONTINUITY OF THE SCHEMES OF  
NATURE AND OF REVELATION.

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A SERMON

PREACHED, BY REQUEST, ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
AT NOTTINGHAM.

WITH REMARKS ON SOME RELATIONS OF MODERN  
KNOWLEDGE TO THEOLOGY.

BY

REV. C. PRITCHARD, M.A. F.R.S.

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CAMBRIDGE: DEIGHTON AND BELL.  
NOTTINGHAM: ALLEN AND SON.

1866.

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# A SERMON

PREACHED AT

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, NOTTINGHAM,

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 26TH, 1866,

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION,

BY

DANIEL MOORE, M.A.

HONORARY CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN, ETC.; AUTHOR OF  
"THE AGE AND THE GOSPEL," ETC.

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LONDON, OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE: RIVINGTONS.  
NOTTINGHAM: R. ALLEN & SON.

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Χρὴ μὲν τοι γε τὸν ἅπαξ παραδεξάμενον τοῦ κτίσαντος τὸν κόσμον  
εἶναι ταύτας τὰς γραφὰς πεπεσθαι, ὅτι ὅσα περὶ τῆς κτίσεως ἀπαντᾷ  
τοῖς ζητοῦσι τὸν περὶ αὐτῆς λόγον, ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν γραφῶν.  
—ORIGEN, *Philocal.*

ΣΩ. Ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστὶ περιμένειν ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς  
θεοὺς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακεῖσθαι.

ΑΛ. Πότε οὖν παρέσται ὁ χρόνος οὗτος, ᾧ Σώκρατες; καὶ τίς ὁ  
παιδεύσων; . . . ΣΩ. Οὗτός ἐστιν ᾧ μέλει περὶ  
σοῦ.—PLATO, *Alcib. II.* . . . PHÆDO, § 60, 61 . . .  
REPUBLIC, § 427.

## PREFACE.

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THIS Sermon was written at Nottingham, immediately after the delivery of Mr. Grove's address to the British Association. Those who had the privilege of then hearing, or who have subsequently read, Mr. Grove's discourse, will at once perceive that his remarks on the System of Nature suggested mine on the Scheme of Divine Revelation. That eminent philosopher pointed out, with a graceful comprehensiveness peculiarly his own, how a Law of CONTINUITY pervades and embraces the whole physical universe, so far at least as our knowledge of it at present extends. There are no gaps, no sudden leaps in Nature, he observed, probably not even in the interplanetary spaces themselves. Modern discovery seems to indicate with more or less distinctness that the sun and the larger planets are in their turns succeeded by smaller asteroids, and these again by zones of revolving meteoric or planetary dust, the position of many of these zones being at least partially determined, and the times and places when they become entangled and inflamed in our atmosphere being accurately known. Saturn, again, has his systems of rings of meteoric matter, and the sun is surrounded by that mysterious substance from whence proceeds the zodiacal light. All these systems of matter, moreover, are either identical in composition, or at all events contain many terrestrial elements in common. Naturalists also tell us that the same sort of unbroken gradation or

CONTINUITY exists in the organic world ; species melting into species, they say, so that the further our knowledge extends, the more difficult it is to decide where one ends and another begins.

The evidence that such is probably the constitution of the things we see, was perhaps never more clearly and succinctly detailed than in the discourse to which I refer. While listening to this account of the constitution of Nature, Origen's remark, quoted by Bishop Butler, could scarcely fail to occur to the mind of any person at all versed in theology, and it certainly occurred to mine. Butler, indeed, for the purposes of his treatise, somewhat narrows the scope of what that most philosophical of ancient divines intends to imply, for the version which he gives is this: "*He who believes the Scriptures to have proceeded from the author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in them as are found in the constitution of Nature.*"\* Origen's remark, however, does not appear to be restricted to the question of *difficulties* alone, but to include any and all generic relations of created things which may be discovered by human research. Had he spoken in the language of our day he would probably have said, "There is a *Continuity* between the Scheme of Nature and the Scheme of Revelation, as recorded in the Scriptures."

In this point of view, and so far as the very restricted limits assigned to me would permit, I have endeavoured to show how the great scheme of redemption may be regarded as a grand continuation, or rather as the divine climax, of that system of intervention and vicarious suffering which not only pervades the natural world, but without which merciful alleviation, that world would become a scene of hopeless misery. Butler, as is well known, has already shown the same thing, under the idea of Analogy, which I here present under the thought of gradation or continuity. I then proceed to show how faith in the Redeemer is a grand continuation also, or rather is the divine climax of that principle of trust-

\* *Analogy*, Introduction. See the original facing the Preface.

fulness in each other, which forms the very cement of the social fabric. Lastly, I have given my reasons for representing the restoration or sanctification of man's moral character by communion with God, as in the main a sacred extension of that Imitative Principle acting through association, which it has pleased God to implant in our nature for many wise and moral purposes, and which in this case He adorns with His especial Grace.

I do not pretend that there is anything essentially new in these thoughts; if there were, this very novelty would have been, to me at least, a sufficient reason for a very guarded reconsideration. But then the *grouping*, I believe, is new, just as the grouping of certain acknowledged principles in the scheme of nature, under the term Continuity, is unquestionably new on the part of Mr. Grove. I think also, that this mode of viewing the scheme of Revelation, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, is not without considerable importance. For surely it must be a matter of great interest to the Christian student, to see how each fresh accession of human knowledge which God has permitted (and as I think has intended) His creatures to make, regarding the natural world, not seldom serves also to illustrate and confirm our faith in that scheme of divine government which is revealed to us in the Bible. It was mainly this consideration which induced me to select this new topic of Continuity, as the proper subject for an address from the pulpit to the members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; and I have to express my gratitude for the patient and respectful hearing which they gave to my remarks.

It may not here be out of place to observe, that the word Continuity is not the only philosophical term for which we are indebted to Mr. Grove. This term he has applied to the *plan* of nature throughout its known extent; but he has also proposed another word, which groups together the *forces* of nature in a singularly happy and expressive manner. These forces co-exist, interlace, osculate with each other; they are capable of evolution in a definite manner, the one from the

other. The associations of matter with motion, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, and chemical action, are all (in the language of Mr. Grove) CORRELATED, and within prescribed limits, are interchangeable in quality and in quantity. This CORRELATION of the physical forces may, I think, be regarded as, upon the whole, the most remarkable discovery since the discussion of the Laws of Gravitation by Newton; and there are not wanting reasons to expect that even the attraction of gravitation itself may be found to be a link in the same physical chain. Now, since it is thus shown that the Divine Governor of the universe has seen fit to bind, in a bond of Correlation, the forces acting in that part of His dominions which are *seen*; ought we not, in the spirit of Origen's remark, to look for a similar Correlation between those principles or laws, which have their proper functions in that part of the Divine Government, which, though *not seen*, is revealed? If we seek for it, we shall find it.

For where do the laws of Providence, for instance, end, and where do the laws of Grace begin? are not both of them phases of the same Divine loving care? Does not the one pre-suppose the other? And a similar remark holds good regarding the functions of Faith, and Hope, and Love, and Obedience. Is not Hope the twin-sister of Faith? And is not Obedience the daughter of Love? \* And what becomes of Obedience when Faith is under a cloud? And in the great scheme of Man's redemption, does not an Apostle tell us that Justification and Sanctification co-exist and interlace? and may not this fact go far to explain the interminable and sometimes unloving discussions regarding their true origin and their distinctive functions?

Hence the sagacious remark made by Origen some fifteen centuries ago, like the expressions of other great comprehensive truths, proves to be prophetic, and reaches to us and embraces our children. And this leads me to observe how unnecessary and how suicidal is that timidity, not to use a stronger term, with which many religious persons, and I

\* See Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*.

regret to add, some divines among us, receive the successive disclosures of the constitution of natural things, which of late years have come upon us in thick abundance. Unnecessary, because each new fact, each new truth, when fairly presented to the mind, if only it be a truth, cannot fail to become a new illustration of Him whom they know to be The Truth, and whom they profess to love. For my own part, and I hope I say it with no affectation, and I am sure I say it with no reserve, from the results of modern research, I have gathered additional reasons for resting in the simplicity of the ancient Christian faith, and in modern discoveries I have found many a new and unexpected trace of the Creator's majesty, of His power, His wisdom, and His love. Some instances of what I mean will, it is hoped, be found in the Sermon which follows these remarks. May I be permitted to say, that if the progress of knowledge shall, on a calm and impartial review, induce Theologians somewhat to modify, here and there, a popular, or hasty, or merely human interpretation of one or two portions of the Divine Revelation, I am quite sure that, with this increase of intelligent perception of the Will of God, there must be associated the exaltation of our reverential love of His Word. At least I, for one, have found it so.

But it seems to me to be worth considering whether this suspicious timidity regarding science and scientific men, may not after all be grounded on an entire mistake. For after all, is it *true* that the pursuit of science has any inherent tendency towards religious scepticism? I would venture to ask whether Kepler, or Newton, or Leibnitz, or Euler, or Linnæus, or Cuvier, were sceptics? If it were not that obvious reasons forbid it, I could put, without misgiving, the same question in reference to the great majority in the long phalanx of living men, who are devoting God's noble gift of genius to the elucidation of God's works. I do not say that the fashionable Positivism of the day has not found some adherents among men of science, as it has found many among educated men of every class. But it is *pre-occupation of mind*, rather than science, which is, and ever

has been, the prolific parent of scepticism and of indifference in religion. Are not the pre-occupations of high position, the pre-occupations of ambition, of literature, of money-getting and of money-spending, of conceit, of sensual habits, and even of idleness, at least as unfriendly to the hearty acceptance of the Christian revelation, as are the pre-occupations of scientific pursuits? I trust I am not guilty of speaking in a presumptuous spirit, if I venture to remark that enormous mischief has arisen from ill-judged, unmerited, and often very ignorant attacks which have been made upon the supposed tendencies of science, and the supposed scepticism of scientific men, from the pulpit, in religious circles, and in religious publications. It is agreeable to no man to be pointed at with the finger of suspicion; and men of sensitive and independent minds will leave, and within my own knowledge have left, a ministration of God's word, not from any natural distaste for revealed truth, but where they have found themselves, and the at least innocent pursuits they love, made the object of covert, and unkind, and ignorant comment. It can be no exaggeration to say, that such an alienation of any highly gifted and influential mind is nothing short of a public loss, and that, therefore, the timidity in question is *suicidal*.

On the other hand, it cannot be doubted, and it may not be concealed, that there is a *reticence*, and I wish I were wrong in adding there is a growing reticence, observable in the modern writings of some able men, which is both disappointing and painful to religious minds. It is a reticence regarding that Eternal Father, Who, even on principles of natural religion alone, is the Prime Cause, and the Governor of that universe, the frame-work of which is the object of the researches of these thoughtful men. It may be that one cause of this reticence is, the natural reaction from certain violations of good taste and propriety, which at one time abounded in the (after all, well-meant) writings of second-hand writers and religious sciolists. It may be that another cause is to be found in that these great writers have in their own minds intentionally distinguished the subjective

from the objective, separating the things of sight from the things of faith; but whatever the causes may be, the fact remains, and as I have said, it is both disappointing and painful. I will only venture to add one observation more upon this subject, and I am sure that the great writers to whom with unfeigned respect I allude, will bear me out in the justness of the remark—and it is this; the giants of old, who were the pioneers of modern knowledge, the Keplers for instance, the Newtons, the Bernoullis, the Eulers of ancient fame, had no such reticence. Why should the sons be more reticent than the fathers? In this behest I cannot do better than conclude with a few passages out of that magnificent Scholium with which Newton closes the *Principia*, and if I give the original it is because I despair of making or of finding a version which could reproduce the eloquence of Newton's words:—“*Elegantissima hæce solis, planetarum et cometarum compages, non nisi consilio et dominio entis intelligentis et potentis oriri potuit. Et si stellæ fixæ sint centra similium systematum, hæc omnia simili consilio constructa suberunt UNIVS dominio . . . Hic omnia regit non ut anima mundi, sed ut Universorum Dominus. Et propter dominium suum, Dominus Deus Παντοκράτωρ dici solet. Nam Deus est vox relativa, et ad servos refertur; et deitas est dominatio Dei, non in corpus proprium, uti sentiunt quibus Deus est anima mundi, sed in servos. Deus summus est ens æternum, infinitum, absolute perfectum . . . Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest . . . Ut cæcus non habet ideam colorum, sic nos ideam non habemus modorum, quibus Deus sapientissimus sentit et intelligit omnia . . . Corpore omni et figurâ corporeâ prorsus destituitur, ideoque videri not potest, nec audiri, nec tangi, nec sub specie rei alicujus corporeæ coli debet . . . Hunc cognoscimus solummodo per proprietates ejus et attributa, et per sapientissimas et optimas rerum structuras et causas finales, et admiramur ob perfectiones; veneramur autem et colimus ob dominium. Colimus enim ut servi, et Deus sine dominio, providentiâ, et causis finalibus nihil aliud est quam fatum et natura. A cæca neces-*

*sitate metaphysicâ, quæ eadem est et semper et ubique, nulla oritur rerum variatio. Tota rerum conditarum pro locis ac temporibus diversitas, ab ideis et voluntate entis necessario existentis solummodo oriri potuit . . . Et hæc de Deo, de quo utique ex phænomenis disserere, ad philosophiam naturalem pertinet."*

In the notes, I have given what appear to me valid reasons, drawn from astronomical and physical considerations, why I cannot accept Mr. Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection, as explaining the development of the human Eye from some greatly inferior organization. If the arguments are correct they extend to other organs also. In the strictures on this theory, I trust not a word will be found inconsistent with that respectful admiration which I, in common with most educated men, entertain for the author of some of the most charming books in our language. I hope, also, Dr. Tyndal will find no just cause for complaint in the manner of my taking exception to some of his recent remarks on Prayer.

The great mental agitation on subjects connected with Religion, for which this age is remarkable, so far from furnishing a reasonable cause for despondency, may fairly be viewed as a providential opportunity for learned and high-placed divines to exhibit and enforce such new aspects of truth as they may consider to have been overlooked.\* It was in this light that Augustine habitually regarded the controversies of his day. It is Anathema, and not moderation in argument, that is a sure sign either of a falling or a weakly supported cause. In contending with an opponent, nothing is gained by that assumption of a tone of superiority, or by that "look of offence, which though harmless in effect, nevertheless," in the words of the greatest of ancient historians,† "is troublesome and painful to those who endure it."

\* See Dean Hook's *Oxford Sermons*, 1837, No. 3.

† Thucyd. lib. ii. cap. 37.

## CONTINUITY OF THE SCHEMES OF NATURE AND OF REVELATION.

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“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been.”—ECCLES. iii. 14, 15.

THESE words would be sufficiently striking even if they were the language of an ordinary man. Coming from a man pre-eminent for wisdom, and opportunity, and experience, from one whose mind moreover was illuminated by the inspiration of God, our text assumes an aspect of more than common importance.

It is possible, indeed, that to some of my hearers our text may suggest unwelcome thoughts of the fixity of human individual destiny: you may imagine for a moment that Solomon therein describes man as entangled in the meshes of an iron necessity which he cannot evade; man, not so much the sport, as the victim of his circumstances; man, as playing in his little day his predestined part, just as other men in their generations before him played their own—for is it not said by

the Royal Preacher, "I know that what God doeth he doeth it for ever ; that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been." But I hope to speak to you to-night of an interpretation of these remarkable words truer, and deeper, and more hopeful. True, I shall have to speak to you of permanent, inevitable laws imposed by the Omnipotent Creator upon the very constitution of His creature's being, and on all the various circumstances which surround him or affect him : but then these laws are devised in consummate wisdom, and are executed in unswerving love ; these laws of our moral, our spiritual being, are to us the expressions of a holy Father's will, they are the explanations of the scheme of His righteous government ; they are to us, and within the limits of our mental powers, the unfolding of the plan on which the creation of mind, and spirit, and matter, was devised and is still sustained.

So far from forging the links of an iron necessity for the thralldom of man, the permanence and invariability of these laws secure the charter of man's liberty of action, they constitute him a responsible creature, they lie at the foundation of his dearest hopes. It is alone because these laws of nature and of being are permanent, that man is enabled to foresee the consequence of his doings ; it is on the security of this ground that he acts with foresight and with confidence, forming and persevering in his plans in the fulness of hope. Nay, your Town is at this time thronged with a

concourse of thoughtful and sagacious men, not solely for the interchange of kindly greetings, but to aid and encourage each other in the search for truths which they know are ordained of God, for purposes beyond those of to-day or of to-morrow, and concerning which they know that, "Whatsoever God doeth, He doeth it *for ever*; nothing can be put to it or taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear Him."

What I want to show you, or to bring to your remembrance to-night, is this;—I want to convince you, if you need the conviction, that those great cardinal facts, or doctrines as we call them, of the Christian faith, which are made known to us by revelation from God, are analogous to, or I might even say are extensions of, those other ordinary facts or principles, by the application of which it is ordained of God that you and I live our hourly life, and that human society coheres day by day. I do not, indeed, mean to say that, by any stretch of thought, the unaided mind of man could have devised or have conceived such a mighty scheme as that of the redemption of the great human family (for instance) through the agency of a crucified Redeemer. I do not mean to say that man, of himself and out of himself alone, could have originated the thought of salvation from the consequences and the power of sin, by faith in that Redeemer. But I do mean to say, that so soon as these cardinal facts of the Christian faith have been taught us, on examination we find they are all of a

piece, and all in consistency with those other wise and beneficent arrangements, which we discern in the world around us and within us. Herein, I say, are verified the words of our text, "That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been."

Brethren, I need scarcely say that a subject such as this will require and deserve all your attention, and will demand more than all my care; do you therefore pray, and let me pray to the Divine Spirit of Grace, that He may—

—"What in us is dark, illumine;  
What is low, raise and support."

I purpose then, under this point of view, to consider,

I. The Redemption of mankind by a suffering Redeemer.

II. The Salvation of man from sin, and from its consequences, by faith in that Redeemer.

III. The Sanctification of man's character, *i.e.* the development of his moral being in righteousness, by the operation of the Divine Spirit, and through prayer.

And my aim, as I have said, will be to show you that these cardinal facts or chief doctrines of revelation, are majestic instances of that same sort of CONTINUITY of the Divine plan in the moral and spiritual world, which we have in this town so lately and so ably been taught to observe in the universe of matter. All these several arrangements, I say,

are but consistent and CONTINUOUS parts of one Divine magnificent plan, ordained of old by the Eternal Father ; “nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it ; that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath been already.”

And first, as touching Redemption by a suffering Redeemer.

Society, the whole fabric of the moral world, is carried on, and is held together by a law, by a scheme of natural intervention or mediation ; I think you could scarcely name a joy you have ever felt, or a trouble from which you have ever escaped, which you cannot trace to the intervention of another, and not rarely to an intervention effected with pain to the intervener.

Think of the little babe ;—there it lies, joyous and redolent with the promise of the activities of life, yet utterly helpless and dependent upon others’ care. But think also of the pale face of her whose strength scarce suffices to nestle her little one in her nerveless arms. Nay, without my bidding, some of you perforce recall to memory, how the mother’s pulse ceased to beat before she could utter a parent’s blessing on her child. And what is all this ? what is it but the redemption of a life, at the cost of the sufferings of another ?

Pass onwards a few years, and trace that child now walking with elastic step at his father’s side—but look upwards at the father’s face ; you will not be surprised to find many a deep furrow there, furrows that bear testimony to the father’s anxieties

and the father's toils—anxieties and toils, that the bright boy who walks at his side may have a good offset for the battle of life before him,—nay, anxieties and toils sometimes deep and inevitable for the bare supply of that child's daily bread. And what means all this? What is it but redemption again, sometimes procured at the cost of labour, and suffering, and tears?

And when is it that you cease to hear men speak of their "friends?" What other word so common among us? Need I remind you what that word "friend" implies? Alas! for the most part it implies, *not* the confiding interchange of thought, *not* the sweet comparison of experience, and hope, and aspiration, *not* the pleasant suggestions which arise from community of taste; for such high privileges are reserved for those only who by patient continuance in well-doing have acquired a capacity to enjoy them; but that commonest of words, a "friend," bears testimony to that commonness of weakness which looks for aid in another's strength, to that commonness of wants which seek their supply in another's abundance; it bears testimony to that commonness of troubles which not rarely can be removed solely at the cost of another's pains, even greater than those which they assuage. There is not, there cannot be, a man before me, who may not trace, again and again, instances of what I mean in his own personal history. "I speak of what we know and feel within."

And think again, for a moment, even of the arts

and conveniences of life ; of the appliances, the inventions, the discoveries which God hath ordained to ennoble life : such results come at no man's light bidding ; the discovery, the invention may come, and in fact must come at last, like a flash, but the happy, the final thought comes to the man of genius only after days, and nights, or even years of patient endurance in intellectual toil. And when it does come to him, not seldom the health is failing, or the lamp of life is flickering and burnt low ; or other men step in, reaping the harvest of his toil, and leaving him little more than the gleanings of the field, the sowing whereof was all his own. Look at the countenances of the chiefs among those able men who now throng your town, and on their brows you will find many a trace of the midnight struggle with thought, ageing them before they have reached their prime : "one soweth and another reapeth." These men labour—you and I "enter into their labours."

And so I might proceed with other instances of a like import ; if the time allowed, I might more than briefly allude to the well-known names of noble men and of noble women still living among us, who, like apostles and martyrs of old, count not their lives dear unto them, if only they may help the helpless, cheer the cheerless, raise the fallen, and impart the joy of hope to the spirit of the dying. But I forbear ; for one continuous system of redemption and of vicarious suffering has been ordained of God as the very law and the plan of our natural being.

Now, such being the scheme, such the manner after which it has pleased the Eternal Creator to impart the joys, to assuage the sorrows, and to enlighten the ignorance, of His creatures in this their natural life, which endures but for threescore years and ten ; I ask you, Is there anything which can reasonably jar upon our feelings if we find that the Eternal Father in His marvellous beneficence has interposed after a like, though *a higher manner*, on behalf of His children in those higher relations of theirs which endure for ever ? For without this interposition, what can man learn by his natural faculties of the life to come ? Without this interposition, what can he ascertain by his natural faculties of the world of spirit ? Does God really care for man with an individual, with a personal care ? Will God hear his prayer ? Did He intend him to pray ? Can there be any sympathy between a pure Almighty God and a sinful man, conscious of his wilful sin ? Is it possible for such a man to be at one with such a God ?

To these anxious questions, the wisest men of ancient times admitted that of themselves they could give no reply. Yet, strange to say, Socrates, confessedly the wisest of them all, more than once, and as it were with the voice of prophecy, expressed his strong conviction, that the God who, he said, manifestly '*cared*' for man, would one day *send him a teacher to instruct him*. What wonder, then, if in the fulness of time God should take compassion on the lost, and ignorant, and pitiable condition of His

children, and, through the mediation of Christ and His matchless example, teach the world what a good man should be, and what a good man may be? What wonder, moreover, if God, through the mediation of His Divine Son, should thus give to man a distinct and *living manifestation* of all that a finite being need know, or can know, of the infinite Godhead? And further still, what wonder if this interposition, this mediation thus made by the Son of God on man's behalf, should be accompanied by the suffering and the death of the incarnate Redeemer? Would it not be all of a piece, would it not be in harmony, in CONTINUITY with those other numberless interventions in man's behalf, which by God's natural appointment we see involve the sufferings of the intervener?

But more still remains. Man is not only confessedly pitiable and ignorant, but he is, and he knows he is, both sinful and a wilful sinner against God. What shall—what can put away such sin? What can make an atonement, a reconciliation between this sinning creature and this all-pure but offended God? The Revelation of God's will to us in the Gospel of His Son tells us it is the Cross of the Redeemer Christ. If you ask me why, or how such things can be, I cannot tell you; at least, by no means fully so. But then, in the natural world, I cannot tell you what, in their subtle essence, are those mysterious agencies called light, or heat, or electricity, or magnetism, or gravitation. Of some of their relations, and of some portion of the laws under which

they are ordained to act, men of genius, after the patience and the failures of ages, have at length caught a glimpse, and of these they have taken ample advantage in the appliances of life. But what these agencies are *in themselves*, who can tell? Neither in the natural world do I know why "like produces like," nor do I know why the worlds, and the creatures which our world contains, are constrained to abide the slow process of their growth, and start not at once into the fulness of their being, like Minerva in her panoply. -And if again I turn to the moral world, I cannot tell you why a righteous Creator permitted sin to defile the beautiful world which He created. I cannot tell you why a loving and wise Father permitted sorrow, and ignorance, and wrong, to be the lot of all His children; but as I see that in the natural world He has provided the mediation and suffering of one man to remove the suffering or the ignorance of another; why should I cavil at a revelation which tells me that man may be pardoned and reconciled to God, through the humiliation, the life, the example, the death, the vicarious sufferings of His incarnate Son? These things angels may well desire to look into. Like the Great Ordainer of these things,

"They are higher than heaven, what can I do?

They are deeper than hell, what can I know?"

So I will bow my head, and I will place myself at the foot of the Saviour's Cross. I will wonder and adore, and I will stay my mind on God. All

that I know is, that the law of Divine Redemption is in harmony, in CONTINUITY with God's other dispensations, and I see that herein "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever. I know that what hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been."

II. We now come to the great Christian scheme of salvation by FAITH in Christ Jesus. Many are the attributes which in the Gospel are assigned to faith. By faith the Christian is said to stand; by faith he walks; by faith he is made pure; by faith he removes mountains; by faith he overcomes all things; by faith he lives, he is justified, and he is saved. But if these attributes assigned to Faith are great, so also are the cavils with which men in all ages have been disposed to admit her claims, and many and grievous are the charges which they have laid at her door. For is it practically found, men have asked—and they have the right to ask it—is it in accordance with experience, that men lead holy lives in proportion to the strength of their religious convictions, and to the purity and perfection of the creeds which they profess? The devils have their convictions, yet the devils tremble and are impure. What, then, is the true source of these apparent contradictions? It lies mainly, I think, in a mistake as to the meaning of the term FAITH itself. Let us try then to ascertain what this much-vaunted, much-misunderstood principle really is. And here I observe, that if there is any one English word which will explain it, it is *trustfulness*.

Indeed, in the English translation of the Old Testament, the equivalent to the same word in the New is invariably rendered by the word "trust;" and if I were to recount to you all the achievements attributed in the Old Testament to *trust* in Jehovah, I should have to repeat to you a large portion of the Old Testament itself; and you would soon perceive how the results of this *trust* in Israel's God, as there revealed, are very much the same as those assigned to *faith* in God as now more fully made known to us in the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

So far, then, we may even here observe a CONTINUITY in the principles of God's dispensations to His creatures, as exhibited to the men of old time, and to us Christians in these latter days. But I wish to go further, and I wish to show you how this same principle faith, or trustfulness, is the very key-stone of the arch of our social fabric, the very strength of our daily natural lives. Now, as in the illustration of the principle of vicarious suffering, which runs through the world of nature, we took the mother's pitiable condition at the birth of her child, so here, to exemplify the continuity of faith, we shall take the instance of the young child itself. For the first years of its existence its whole life is of necessity a life of dependence and trust. In faith it seeks its natural food; in faith it nestles itself in its mother's breast; in faith it strives to stand; in faith it lisps the fond names of father, and of mother; and, blessed be God, in this Christian land in faith it sits upon its mother's lap, and with stam-

mering lips learns to call upon the name of Jesus. As years advance the young child walks at his father's side, and, gazing in his father's face with unquestioning faith, learns from him and applies the first lessons of the life before him. Thus the young child, by the natural ordinance of God, is reared and nurtured as it were in a cradle of faith, and if not too indocile he soon becomes a fitting emblem (and the illustration here is not mine, you will see)—he becomes an emblem of those children of an elder growth, who live the life of the true citizens of the kingdom of God.

But these early lessons in faith stop not here. In faith and patience he painfully learns the arts of maturer life. In faith he ploughs; in faith he sows; in faith he gathers into barns; in faith he launches into the deep; in faith he borrows; in faith he lends; in faith he carries on his commerce with his brother man, often and of necessity confiding to his care the very means to which he looks for his daily bread. Need you any further illustration of what faith is, and what faith achieves? Think for a moment of that wonderful thread which now, by God's good pleasure, unites and associates two distant continents. It was FAITH that laid that wire, overcoming the elements, scaling the mountains, and spanning the unknown caverns which form the dark floor of the ocean. It was faith, I say, which for days and nights together, without one moment's intermission, kept the strong, untiring arm, and the fixed, watchful eye, upon the marvellous appliances, until they

reached the haven where they would be, and had learnt that the mother of many nations had in the flash of a moment sent the greeting of love to her child in the far-off west. Meanwhile, strange to say, upon the shores of the East, there were other and less harmonious sounds to be heard than those of the triumph of the victory of faith. These were the sounds of wailing : Germany weeping for her children because they were not ; and among ourselves, thousands of hearts failing them for fear of the wreck of their substance. And wherefore were these sounds of mourning, and whence came this fear ? You may trace them to the absence of FAITH. Nations and men had lost their faith in each other, and the offspring of Distrust are War and Panic. Hand in hand, and close by the side of FAITH, stands her sister HARMONY ; when FAITH departs, CHAOS soon takes her place.

Thus you see, my brethren, that the faith in Jesus, the trust, I mean, in a sympathizing, personal Saviour, whereby the Christian stands ; the faith in Jesus whereby the sinner is purified, justified, and saved, is, after all, no new principle, but rather the old and abiding principle of trustfulness, which alone gives cohesion to our natural life. It is the old principle indeed,—but the old principle greatly heightened, intensified, sanctified by the Spirit of God. It is the golden chain which unites the visible world of flesh with the unseen world of spirit, assuring the child of nature that he is the child of God. Here then, again, and once more, we observe

the CONTINUITY of the natural dispensations of God's providence with the spiritual dispensation of God's grace; and herein it is that we know that "what God doeth, He doeth it for ever,"—"that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been."

III. And now, had the time permitted, as I had hoped it would, I should have tried to show you how even the great doctrine of the sanctification of man's character by the Spirit of God, and acting for the most part through the medium of prayer, is again all of a piece, and in continuity with other eternal principles which God has impressed upon our natural being; but the subject is too large a one for me at this late hour to draw upon your patience. Nevertheless, some few thoughts must be briefly expressed to you on the subject of PRAYER.

I need scarcely remind you that it is in prayer that the true, the advanced Christian lives. It is his soul's daily, hourly food. But, after all, what is this prayer? Is there anything which at all resembles it and its effects in the world of flesh wherein we move? Prayer, in its deep reality and in its highest form, is the reverential intercourse of the Christian's spirit with the spiritual world: it is reverential communion with God,—communion with God (that is) as manifested in Christ Jesus. Now let me ask you, what takes place in the ways of a man's life, who lives much in the society of his friends? Does he not by intercourse catch their modes of thought? Does he not

contract their habits, and imitate their manner of life? And all this result arises from a great principle of *imitation*—a principle of imitation, which God for the wisest purpose has implanted in the nature of man. Just so,—only in a higher, and holier, and more reverential degree,—just so with the Christian in his true prayers and in communion with God. Just in proportion to the reality and frequency of this holy, spiritual intercourse, will be the gradual approximation of his own character to that of the ineffably perfect and Holy Being who, through the great name of Jesus, permits and encourages His creatures to approach Him. Hence it is that we read such words as “growth in grace,” and of the Christian being “built up into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Need you an example of what I mean? Think for a moment of the Apostle John: in him, beyond all other men, shine conspicuously the qualities of dignity and love; and were not these especially the characteristics of the one, perfect, matchless, Divine Man, who made the Apostle His companion, ever walking at his Master’s side and leaning on His bosom as He sat at meat? And so it is, in his own measure and degree, with every Christian who really communes with God;—his character becomes gradually moulded into the character of Christ; and thus more nearly resembling Christ, he gradually becomes more amiable, more truthful, more self-constrained, more forgiving, more peaceful. I say especially, more *peaceful*. For, mark you, what is the Law

of Prayer in the kingdom of God? It is "men ought always to pray and not to faint;" it is "in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God:" nor must we forget, that He who is our example and "all our hope," added to His prayer: "nevertheless, not my will, but THINE be done." And then, mark you, with especial care, what is the Law of the Promise attached to prayer. It is *not* that the bitter cup shall, in all cases, be put away; it is *not* that the thorn in the flesh shall, in all cases, be removed; it is *not* that the precise petitions shall be as precisely granted; but, better far than this, the Law of the Promise is, that God, if need be, will give fortitude to drink the cup, strength to bear the cross, grace sufficient to endure the thorn. Beyond all, the Law of the Promise is, that the Christian shall rise from his knees *peaceful*; he shall become peaceful like the God of peace with whose Spirit he has held communion, and at whose footstool he has prayed. "Let your requests be made known unto God, and the PEACE OF GOD,—the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall *garrison* your hearts and minds." "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God."

In the strength of this peace of God, Stephen, before the face of those who stoned him, fell asleep in Jesus, praying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

In this peace, Paul and Silas, thrust in the prison

with their feet made fast in the stocks, at midnight sang praises unto God.

In this peace, Polycarp bade the executioner leave him unbound at the stake, for that same God, in communion with whom he had lived, would nerve him, that he flinched not when he died.

In this peace, Boniface, the martyr and apostle to the Germans, before setting out on his last missionary journey, bravely but calmly thus gave his final instructions: "My son, place in the chest with my books a linen cloth, in which, should occasion arise, they may wrap my worn-out corpse."

In this peace, Luther stood before his enemies, and the enemies of truth, at the Diet of Worms, and, taking the Bible in his hands, exclaimed, "*By this I stand!*"

In this peace, Rowland Taylor, of Hadley, walked to the stake with head erect and hopeful eye, as a man would return to the home that he loved.

In this peace, Ridley looked forward with joy to the flames, and bade his sister come to his marriage.

In this peace, thousands upon thousands of God's children, far from the gaze and the applause of the crowd, have kept the even tenor of a Christian life, in prosperity without elation, in penury without discontent, in bereavements without questionings, in suffering without repining, in revilings without reviling again.

These all lived in prayer and communion with God, and, like God, they became PEACEFUL; and after

this law, so it may be with you and me, for "*I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been.*"

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## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A.

#### ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY NATURAL SELECTION.

I HAVE taken the liberty of expressing my admiration of Mr. Grove's philosophical acumen in grouping together the plan and operations of nature under one felicitous term. He is, I am sure, far too candid—in his address to the British Association; he has travelled over far too wide a field, and he is too conscious of the difficulties attending physical researches, not to be prepared for objections to at least some of his remarks.

He appears to have accepted the Darwinian Hypothesis as explaining the origin of that Continuity which undoubtedly exists in the natural world. I, for one, am unable to accept that Hypothesis in its length and breadth without great reserve. As an illustration of the general nature of the objections which I entertain, I will take an instance from that branch of physics with which it is my lot to be most familiar—the Optical Structure of the Human Eye. From the cornea to the retina the eye is an Optical Instrument. But what an Instrument! The computation of the curves and distances of the refracting surfaces in this instrument, and the assigning of the proper law of density for the several layers in its principal lens, would require the application of a mathematical analysis, such as I hesitate not to say was never yet possessed by a human geometer. The mechanism required for instantaneously changing the forms and distances, and in one instance the magnitude, of its com-

ponent parts, would require a handicraft such as never yet was possessed by a human mechanic. I say nothing of the chemistry required for the composition of the several constituent media. I presume Mr. Darwin would admit that this description is not exaggerated. Now let us attend to the process of "natural selection," by which this marvellous organ is said to have come into being. "I can see," says Mr. Darwin,\* "no very great difficulty (not more than in the case of many other structures), in believing that natural selection has converted the simple apparatus of an optic nerve, merely coated with pigment and invested by transparent membranes, into an optical instrument as perfect as is possessed by any member of the great Articulate Class," *i. e.* as perfect as the human eye. And next comes the mode after which this simple apparatus of the coated nerve, by insensible additions gradually but *accidentally* made, is said to be converted at length into the eye of man. "We ought in imagination to take a thick layer of transparent tissue with a nerve sensitive to light beneath, and then suppose every part of this layer to be continually changing slowly in density, so as to separate into layers of different densities and thicknesses, placed at different distances from each other, and with the surfaces of each layer slowly changing in form. Further, we must suppose that there is a power always intently watching each slightly *accidental alteration* in the transparent layers, and carefully selecting each alteration which, under varied circumstances, may, in any way, or in any degree, tend to produce a distincter image. We must suppose each new state of the instrument to be multiplied by the million; and each to be preserved till a better be produced, and then the old ones to be destroyed. Let this process go on for millions on millions of years. . . ." Now we must here ask, What is this "power always intently watching each slightly accidental alteration?" A few lines further down in Mr. Darwin's page we read: "NATURAL SELECTION will pick out with unerring skill each improvement." But what is

\* *Origin of Species*, edit. 1, pp. 188, 189.

this "Natural Selection?" We must here take Mr. Darwin's own definition: "This preservation of favourable variations, and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection."\*

Now to me there appear three objections, which indispose me to accept the above description of the processes by which the human eye could have been formed, and I will state them as succinctly as I can. First, consistently with such knowledge of optical combinations as I happen to possess, I cannot understand how, by any series of *accidental* variations, so complicated a structure as an eye could possibly have been successively *improved*. The chances of any accidental variation in such an instrument being an *improvement* are small indeed. Suppose, for instance, one of the surfaces of the crystalline lens of the eye of a creature, possessing a crystalline and cornea, to be accidentally altered, then I say, that unless the form of the other surface is simultaneously altered, in one only way out of millions of possible ways, the eye would not be optically *improved*. An alteration also in the two surfaces of the crystalline lens, whether accidental or otherwise, would involve a definite alteration in the form of the cornea, or in the distance of its surface from the centre of the crystalline lens, in order that the eye may be optically better. All these alterations must be simultaneous and definite in amount, and these definite amounts must coexist in obedience to an extremely complicated law. To my apprehension then, that so complex an instrument as an eye should undergo a succession of millions of *improvements*, by means of a succession of millions of *accidental* alterations, is not less improbable, than if all the letters in the "Origin of Species" were placed in a box, and on being shaken and poured out millions on millions of times, they should at last come out together in the order in which they occur in that fascinating and, in general, highly philosophical work.

But my objections do not stop here. The improvement of an organ must be an improvement relative to the new circum-

\* *Origin of Species*, p. 81.

stances by which the organ is surrounded. Suppose, then, that an eye is altered for the better in relation to one set of circumstances under which it is placed. By-and-bye there arise a second set of circumstances, and the eye is again, by Natural Selection, altered and improved relatively to the second set of circumstances. What is there to make the second set of circumstances, such that the second improvement (relative to them) shall be an improvement or progress *in the direction of* the ultimate goal of the human eye? Why should not the second improvement be a retrogression *away from* the ultimate organ now possessed by man, and necessary to his well-being? But all this suiting of the succession of circumstances is to go on, not once or twice, but millions on millions of times. If this be so, then not only must there be a BIAS in the order of the succession of the circumstances, or, at all events, in the vast outnumbering of the unfavourable circumstances by the favourable; but so strong a bias, as to remove the whole process from the accidental to the *intentional*. The *bias*\* implies the existence of a Law, a Mind, a Will. The process becomes one not of Natural Selection, but of *Selection by an Intelligent Will*.

In considering the state of things just described, we must also take into the account, that the successive variations of the eye are said to be *accidental*. What, then, but a *constantly exerted* Intelligent Will, could cause the occurrence of new circumstances so as to meet these accidental variations, and concur ultimately to produce a certain definite result, that is to say, an instrument possessing the necessary and truly wonderful contrivances of the Human Eye? But is such a process to be called Providence, or Miracle, or the Inversion of Providence?

Further still. Mr. Darwin considers that the process of natural selection must have gone on for millions on millions of years, in order to have produced the results which surround us. It is difficult to assign any approximate limitation to the meaning

\* On this subject of bias, see a highly philosophical review of 'Quetelet on Probabilities,' in Sir John Herschel's 'Essays.'

of the term millions on millions of years. But in turning to page 287 of the "Origin of Species," I find the author considers that the denudation of the Weald must have required some three hundred millions of years! This denudation is but a trivial process, indeed, compared with the mighty geological evolutions which have occurred between that denudation and the present time; and inconceivably trivial compared with other evolutions which preceded it. Mr. Darwin says, page 489, "As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived *long before* the Silurian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that *no cataclysm has desolated the whole world*.\* Hence we may look with some confidence *to a secure future of equally inappreciable length*."

If then we assign a period of one million of millions of years to have elapsed, during which natural selection has worked for the production of a human eye, we may presume we are within the limits contemplated by Mr. Darwin.

Now, I do not hesitate to say that this assumption is entirely out of harmony with the existing state of knowledge.

For during the deposition of the Silurian strata, there must have been a deep ocean, and terrestrial things were then proceeding, Mr. Darwin says, on pretty much the same quiet model as at present. But it has been rendered extremely probable by the researches of Adams, Hansen, Delaunay, Airy,† and some others, that owing to the combined action of the ocean and the moon, the length of the day has been, and is now, undergoing a constant increase, and this effect has been going on in all time since there has been an ocean surrounding this solid earth. Now, in accordance with the calculations of the above most cautious and most eminent astronomers, what would the reader suppose must have been the length of a day on the earth, *if* the earth had existed with a continent and an ocean, one million of millions of years ago? I do not think he will be prepared for the result.

\* The Italics here and elsewhere are mine.

† See *Monthly Notices Royal Ast. Soc.* Feb. 1866.

Before I venture to state it, I request him to bear in mind Mr. Darwin's very necessary caution, relative to what Butler calls "that forward, delusive faculty," the imagination, viz., "*his reason ought to conquer his imagination.*"

One million of million years ago, if the solid earth could then have been provided with an ocean, the length of the day would probably have been less than the flash of the hundredth of a second of time!!

Moreover, if, as the author of the "Origin of Species" conceives, "we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally inappreciable length," then, in forming our estimate of the security of that future, we must take into our account the consideration that—

One million of million of years hence the duration of the day will exceed eighty years!!

Unless, indeed, for certain physical reasons the Earth, like other satellites, at length shall rotate round its own axis, in the same time as it takes to revolve round the Sun, that is, unless the day become a year. Nor is it from astronomical investigations alone that we are compelled greatly to shorten the heretofore supposed excessive duration of terrestrial things, but other physical considerations unconnected with astronomy point to the same conclusion. Professor Thompson,\* in his researches on the "Dissipation of Force," assigns what appear to be conclusive reasons for believing that the Earth has not been, nor will continue to be, in a condition suited to the existence of known organised beings for any thing approaching the time which Mr. Darwin has assigned to the denudation of the Weald alone. It is, however, only fair to Mr. Darwin to observe, that the astronomical and physical researches referred to, have been completed subsequently to the publication of the "Origin of Species."

\* Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 1865, and Rede Lecture, 1866.

On reading Mr. Darwin's enchanting volume, we seem to be, as it were, in the hands of a great magician, who leads us up and down the Elysian fields, pointing out to us on this side and on that new aspects of things which, though true, were beyond the reach of our expectations ; nevertheless, when as we hope, we are nearing the hill-top and getting a sight of the primordial genesis of organised beings, the chariot on which he has mounted us rolls down the hill like the stone of Sisypheus.

“ With hands and feet struggling, he shoved the stone  
Up a hill-top ; but the steep well-nigh  
Vanquished, by some great force repulsed, the mass  
Rushed again obstinate down to the plain.

Tall trees, fruit laden, with inflected heads  
Stooped to us ; pears, pomegranates, apples bright,  
The luscious figs, and unctuous olive smooth,  
Which, when with sudden grasp we would have seized,  
Winds whirled them high into the dusky clouds.”

ODYSSEY, Book xi.

Thus baffled, nothing that I can see remains but that we take our refuge in the magnificent old words,—

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. HE SPAKE THE WORD AND THEY WERE MADE ; HE HATH GIVEN THEM A LAW WHICH SHALL NOT BE BROKEN.

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## NOTE B.

### ON PRAYER.

“ In it did he live,  
And by it did he live ; it was his life.  
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power  
That made him ; it was blessedness and love ! ”

WORDSWORTH.

Some months have now elapsed since Professor Tyndal, in the public journals, put a question regarding prayer, which at

the time excited much attention and some animadversion. In reference to the propriety of prayer to God for the removal of epidemic and other diseases, Dr. Tyndal asked whether "Prayer had proved itself a match for vaccination?" Various answers were given to this question, and to the other questions which this one essentially involves, I will now, after my manner, endeavour to give my own reply.

In one of those exquisite Dialogues which have come down to us from the wisest of the ancients for an everlasting possession, Socrates is represented as meeting a great statesman in the streets of Athens, on his way to the temple of some god to pray. The nature of his errand was manifest from the chaplet which he carried in his hand, while the gravity with which he kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, indicated that the object of the vow he was about to offer was, in the statesman's thought, one of more than ordinary importance. Whether it was that Socrates well knew the restless ambition of Alcibiades (for that was the statesman's name), and therefore suspected that his friend and disciple, having some unscrupulous project on foot, was now on his way to conciliate the good-will of the god for its accomplishment; or whether the mere sight of the sacrificial chaplet alone suggested the thought, we are told that the sage immediately stopped the statesman, and, as his wont ever was, began to ply him with a string of questions, the drift of the questions now being directed to the proper objects and the propriety of prayer. "Do you think," said he, "that the gods sometimes grant and sometimes refuse our prayers? Do you see that there are very many foolish men,—some of them foolish even to madness,—and that such men necessarily offer to the gods very foolish prayers? Do you think there is no danger, that while you ask for what you believe will be for your good, you may inadvertently be seeking for what, if granted, would be your ruin? And then he goes on to ask him what sort of knowledge a man should properly possess before it was safe for him to pray to the gods. Should it not be the knowledge of what is *the best*? And are they many, or are they few, who possess this know-

ledge? And if they have not this knowledge, how do they know what they ought to pray for? Hereupon Alcibiades confesses himself perplexed, and says, "he inclines to leave the choice of blessings to the gods." Socrates then digresses to questions regarding that state of the suppliant's mind which is most agreeable to the god; and after recounting an anecdote or two, of how a certain costly and magnificent national ritual had been disregarded by the gods, while they had lent a propitious ear to a very simple prayer, he quotes a few lines from Homer, to the effect that "the gods care not for our gifts, but they do regard the state of our souls."

The Sage then proceeds to tell the statesman that there was indeed one prayer which seemed to him both wise and safe; he had learned it, he says, from an old poet, who had recommended it to his friends who were praying unwisely, and it was to the following effect:—"Sovereign Jove, what is good for us, grant, though we ask it not; but from what is dangerous, though we ask for it, O King, deliver us!"\* Even to us in this nineteenth century, these are burning words, reminding us of words familiar and more burning still, and one might have supposed they would have satisfied Alcibiades. He does indeed go so far as to admit that the prayer was both wise and safe, but Alcibiades was an Athenian, and "the Greeks seek after wisdom." To them, all ignorance was, as it still is to some modern philosophers, a positive evil; and this prayer, safe as it was, seemed little better than an appeal to, or it might be even the offspring of, ignorance. Thereupon ensues a series of questions as to human ignorance, but these I omit as not being essential to our present argument; and I now come to a thought which to some of my readers will appear not alone unexpected, but even startling, as proceeding from a heathen philosopher more than two thousand years ago.

"Alcibiades, you are perplexed and even disappointed, but you must wait," said Socrates; "you must wait till there comes

\* Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνέγκτοις  
Ἄρμυϊ δίδου, τὰ δὲ δεινὰ, καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπολέζον.

Plato, Alcib. II. p. 143.

some one who shall be instructed how to remove this ignorance." "And when will this time come?" asks the statesman; "and who shall be my teacher?" "It is even *one who cares for you*,"\* replies the sage; "as Homer says that Minerva removed the mist from the eyes of Diomede,

" 'That he might well discern if the shape were a god or a mortal;'

so must this teacher remove the mist which now envelopes your mind, that you may discern what is good and what is evil, which at present, methinks, you have no power to see." "Well, then," said Alcibiades, "if only he makes me better, let him remove the mist, or whatever else it may be, and whosoever this man may be." "And he will do it," rejoins Socrates, "for it is marvellous how great is the regard he bears you." "It seems, then," concludes Alcibiades, "that till this teacher comes, I had better defer my prayer."

Such, then, was the knowledge, such were the hopes, and such was the indecision of the best-informed among the ancients, on the subject of prayer. So deep, so irrepressible, so unsatisfied, appears to have been the longing of the great thinkers of the heathen world for the advent of some teacher who should throw a light upon the relations in which men stand to the world unseen, that the thought of it, we are told, recurred to the martyr sage when there remained but an hour or two before the fatal cup was to set the seal to the sincerity of his life. But it was not now, as before, the need and the hope of a teacher who should inform him how to demean himself before the God at the time of his prayer, or even what it was safe for him to pray for, but it was now rather the utterance of the longing for a teacher who should deliver his friends,—not himself observe, but his friends,—*from the fear of death*. It even might be that Socrates suspected the two teachers would be one and the same. "It is not ourselves," said his friend Cebes in the prison, "that are frightened, it is rather a child within us that is terrified; but, alas! now that you are about to leave us, where shall we find one who is master

\* See Motto facing the Preface.

of a spell sufficient to remove this fear?"\* "Greece is a wide place," replies the calm, heroic old man, "and there are many foreign nations also, and in search of this teacher we must explore many regions, and spare neither trouble nor money in the search; and you must search also amongst yourselves for this gift, for, perhaps, you will not easily find any one who possesses this power more than you do." And these are among the last words of the wisest of men, spoken while they who had the appointed office were even now grinding the hemlock that was to consign him to his doom.

It is here that, with a sort of passionate impatience, our thoughts glance across the breadth of but a narrow sea, from Athens and from the utterance of these dim hopes, to where the last of a long line of Hebrew prophets at that very time, was speaking, as his brethren for a thousand years had spoken before him, of the advent of such a teacher, yet more than a teacher, and that with no stammering lips, but as if he were nigh at the very door. "You must search for him, you must spend your labour and your money in the search," said the dying sage, and he said it possibly from the natural convictions of his polished intellect. "Behold! He shall come, the messenger whom ye seek shall come! the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings!" These were the last words of the last of the expiring race of the Hebrew Seers; and he spoke from the inspired emotions of his heart. For four hundred years there was no more such Sage, nor for four hundred years was the voice heard of any such Prophet.

To Doctor Tyndal's question, and what it involves, the words quoted above give nearly all the answer which Natural Religion can supply. It may, however, be added that the scheme of CONTINUITY observable in nature cannot but force upon our minds the contemplation of the existence of created intelligences superior to ourselves, and active with a diviner energy, in some other parts of the universe, or even close to our paths or nigh to our beds, and so onwards and onwards, until we reach the One Infinitely Intelligent and Beneficent Mind, the Lord and Creator of them all.

\* Plato, *Phædo*, § 60, 61.

And here, again, the scheme of CORRELATION steps in, and inasmuch as it has been shown to apply as closely to the laws of our moral nature as to the laws of our physical being, it affords to us something more than the dawn of a hope that inasmuch as there is implanted within our universal nature a principle or affection for religion, and a yearning for intercourse with some spiritual essences beyond ourselves, so there must be, in correlation to this affection and this yearning, some proper object for that affection to adore, and some spirits to reciprocate the sympathies of that yearning.

Now in this darkness or this light of nature, call it which you please, the Christian points to that Teacher for the advent of whom the ancient sages longed. To that Divine Teacher's Word the Christian must listen, and that example which He set, the Christian must strive to follow. It is needless to say this Divine Man was pre-eminently a man of prayer; and if you ask how and for what He prayed, and what He declared was the Law of Prayer in the new kingdom which He said He came to establish, it will all be found in the records of His life, and some small portion of it has been indicated in the Sermon which precedes this note. The remark, however, may here be added, for it bears especially on the question before us: there once came an hour when the approach of physical suffering appalled even that Man of Strength, and His prayer then was, that God His Father, if possible, would *remove the cup*, but if not, "THY WILL BE DONE." I could say more than this, if in reverence and propriety I dared, for I could refer to those strong, sad, mysterious cryings upon the Cross when the Teacher whom the Sages longed for, the Saviour of the World, was bruised for our iniquities, and was bearing the chastisement of our sins; but the theme is too sacred, and our natural emotions are neither to be tempted nor trusted here.

When, then, Dr. Tyndal asks whether it is right to pray for the aversion of cholera, or of smallpox, or of physical suffering of any sort, or whether vaccination proved a match for prayer, I have given the answer; partly here, and partly in the Sermon.

But how know we that the Teacher has come, and that His

religion comes from God ? For the learned we appeal to the testimony of history ; for the learned and unlearned alike there is this better evidence — TRY IT.\*

If it be still further urged that the scheme of nature is carried on by fixed unalterable laws, and that the storm whose cradle is in the Atlantic must spend its fury on the very spot where the laws of heat and of vapour bid it ; if it be said that the path of the cholera, the cattle plague, the smallpox, is as surely prepared beforehand and as inevitably as is the path of the electric flash — be it so ; — but whence know we that intervention is impossible ? I see at this moment a bud on one of the trees which skirt the boundary of my neighbour's land. I know that when that bud has become a branch next year it is certain from the laws of nature on what precise spots and at what precise moments the several leaves of that branch will fall. But not so ; my neighbour next year may erect his haystack close by that tree, and then all is changed. But is not the whole life of man spent in contriving interventions of those consequences which would follow if the laws of nature took their own course independent of his will ? By the force of the genius which the Creator has given him, does he not harness the winds and guide the lightning, and make fire, and air, and earth, and water, do the bidding of his intelligent desires ? Does not the law of Continuity, then, lead us to expect that the Will of the Creator must be at least as free to intervene as is the will of the creature ?

I will conclude this long note by referring to the sentiments entertained on the subject which has so long detained us, by one of the most acute and independent minds that ever existed. It is said of the great philosopher Coleridge, that in one of his youthful poems, speaking of God, he writes,

“ ——— Of whose all-seeing eye  
Aught to demand were impotence of mind ! ”

But in his maturer years he told one of his friends that he reverted to this sentiment with strong compunction. He con-

\* This is the practical argument somewhere proposed by Coleridge.

sidered that the act of praying was the very highest energy of which the human heart was capable, praying, that is, with the total concentration of the faculties; and the great mass of worldly men and of learned men he pronounced absolutely incapable of prayer. Two years before his death he said, "Believe me, to pray with all your heart and strength, with the reason and the will, to believe vividly that God will listen to your voice through Christ, and verily do the thing He pleaseth thereupon,—this is the last, the greatest achievement of the Christian warfare upon earth. TEACH us to pray, O Lord." And then he burst into a flood of tears.\*

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NOTE C.

THE PHILOSOPHER FOLLOWED—AFTER MANY DAYS.

Mr. Grove, in page 35 of his Address, says:—"The fair question is, Does the newly-proposed view remove more difficulties, require fewer assumptions, and present more consistency with observed facts than that which it seeks to supersede? If so, the philosopher will adopt it, and the world will follow the philosopher—after many days."

This thought, which it is presumed will be accepted by all who are competent to form an opinion, provided a sufficiently comprehensive meaning is attached to the word Philosopher, was so beautifully expressed by Plato in one of his exquisite allegories, some two thousand years ago, that for the sake of the general reader, I will here reproduce it. "Let us figure to ourselves a number of persons chained from their birth in a subterranean cavern, with their backs to the entrance of the cavern, and a fire burning behind them, between which and the prisoners runs a roadway, flanked by a wall high enough to conceal the persons who pass along the road, while it allows the shadows

\* This note is to be read with Part III. of the Sermon. There is a paper on this subject in "Good Words" for Feb. 1866, by the Rev. J. J. Perowne, of Lampeter, which will repay a perusal.

of things which they carry on their heads to be thrown by the fire on the wall of the cavern facing the prisoners, to whom these shadows, and the voices of the carriers, will appear the only realities. Now, suppose that one of them has been unbound and taken up to the light of day, and gradually habituated to the objects around him, till he has learned properly to appreciate them. Such a man is to the prisoners what the rightly-educated philosopher is to the mass of half-educated men. If he returns to the cavern and resumes his old seat and occupations, he will, at first, be the laughing stock of the place, just as the philosopher is the laughing-stock of the multitude. But once re-habituated to the darkness of the cavern, his knowledge of the objects which throw the shadows, will enable him to surpass the prisoners on their own ground. . . .”\*

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NOTE D.

ARE CHRISTIAN ETHICS AN ADVANCE ON ANCIENT ETHICS ?

The foregoing free version of a part of the Platonic dialogue, brings me to the last remark, which I shall venture to make, on the President's address. In page 37 he says:—"In Ethics we have scarcely, if at all, advanced beyond the highest intellects of Greece or Italy. . . ." Certainly no clearer or truer view could be given of the tendency of the advancement of learning than the one put into the mouth of Socrates as quoted above. But is it *true* that no advance has been made in ethics since the days of Plato? These notes extend to so great a length that I shall confine myself to the following few and intentionally very brief remarks, or rather hints :—

I. Deuteronomy was written a thousand years before the birth of Socrates; and a long line of inspired Hebrew poets had

\* Plato, " Republic," book vii.

ceased to prophesy before Aristotle commenced his writings. I think the old Hebrew ethics will bear something more than a very favourable comparison with any system of moral philosophy that was ever debated within sight of the Acropolis, before the day when Paul at Athens read the inscription "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD."

II. Are not the following ethical principles greatly in advance of the teachings of the highest intellects of Greece?

Render to no man evil for evil.\*

Love your enemies.

Honour *all* men.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.

Husbands love your wives even *as* Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. And, until the Man of sorrows set the example, who had ever gone about "*doing good*"?

In contrast with these Christian maxims, may be placed the fact, that Plato himself extols the Athenians for their hatred of foreigners;† Aristotle calls abstinence from the retaliation of evil, the mark of a slavish spirit;‡ and it is well known how the disciple and biographer of Socrates reckons the infliction of injuries upon an enemy, among the most manly of the virtues.§ But in forming an estimate of the superiority of Christian over Ancient Ethics, there are two circumstances to be borne in mind over and above the ethical principles themselves. First, it is a great peculiarity of Christianity, that it presents the model of a Life for the Christian's imitation. Secondly, it provides a transforming power, whereby its precepts may be spontaneously obeyed. For in proportion to the degree in which the Christian

\* Compare this with Aristotle Ethics, book v. chap. v. where he says: "for a man not to retaliate evil, appears to be slavishness of mind." The play upon the word Gratitude in the next clause, proves that the great ethical philosopher includes *private* retaliation, as well as public justice.

+ Menexenus, § 17. But see Whewell. † Ethics, Ch. v. book v.

§ Xenophon, Anabasis.

realizes his calling, he surrenders his will and his affections to a living Christ, ever present to his vision by the eye of faith ; and hence not only are the unlovely passions and emotions of his natural heart subdued by the expulsive power of a new affection, but by virtue of the bond which unites himself to Christ, he becomes united to his fellow-Christians by the strongest of ties. Nay, this feeling, thus divinely inspired, is more comprehensive still ; for, just as the well-instructed man sees in flowers, and shrubs, and trees, not the sickly, stunted vegetation, which may chance to be before him, but rather the luxuriance natural to them in a happier climate and a more congenial soil, so the Christian, by virtue of his faith, sees in every man, the man redeemed, the Christ within the man ; to him every man becomes a brother, and by an inborn principle, he becomes a law to himself, spontaneously rendering to no man evil for evil, loving his enemies, and honouring all men. Such are Christian ethics *in their truth and purity*. When the great Athenian moralist was forming his ideal state, he proposed, for all the ordinances and sanctions of religion, to refer to the Oracle at the Omphalos of the world ;\* to the Christian, that Omphalos is the CROSS OF CHRIST.

\* Republic, book iv.

